DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 213 364 HE 014 865

AUTHOR Maio, Eugene A.; Buchtel, Foster S.
TITLE The Importance of Team Leadership Development to the Urban University's Mission.
PUB DATE May 77
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the National Invitational Conference "Toward the Urban University" (Chicago, IL, May 9-10, 1977). For related documents, see HE 014 806 and HE 014 866-867.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Role; Change Agents; College Administration; College Faculty; *College Planning; College Role; Cooperative Planning; *Decision Making; *Faculty Development; Governance; Higher Education; Interprofessional Relationship; *Leadership Responsibility; *Teacher Administrator Relationship; Teamwork; *Urban Universities
IDENTIFIERS *Participative Management; *University of Akron OH

ABSTRACT

Perspectives on the role of the urban university and the development and implementation of team leadership programs are presented. It is suggested that the urban metropolis is a part of the university's mission, and is an extremely complex network of institutional structures, and human resources. The university can respond to urban needs by developing team leadership programs. To function successfully as a change agent to improve the quality of life in the urban complex, new forms of leadership are needed, including the use of project teams and task forces. Team leadership groups enable people to take various roles; to identify with the adaptive and change process, and to develop an ability to modify their commitments as needs arise. Through the support of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, a team leadership development program for faculty and administrators was designed and implemented at the University of Akron, Ohio, to help promote its urban mission and to serve as a model for other urban universities. The program activities included full-day classes, task forces, internships, resource groups, breakfast forums, and a retreat. The initial focus was intergroup interaction and communication (listening, awareness, and understanding), and later emphasis was directed to understanding the structure and dynamics of university organization and operations. Task force recommendations were presented to the university president, and participants are actively involved in implementing recommendations. Internships provided participants the opportunity to work in a problem-solving activity that transcended departmental and disciplinary lines. Additionally, both formative and summative evaluations are conducted. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Foster S. Buchtel
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED213364

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAM LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TO THE URBAN UNIVERSITY'S MISSION

Eugene A. Maio and Foster S. Buchtel

Presented at the National Invitational Conference,
"Toward the Urban University," May 9-10, 1977,
Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, Illinois

This paper will establish and relate three perspectives: one, that the urban metropolis that is essentially a part of the university's mission is an extremely complex network of institutional structures, human resources, and continuous processes; two, why the university's response to the complex needs of the metropolis requires the development of team leadership programs; and, three, how a program to develop team leadership can be designed and implemented.

The concept of the university's urban mission is constantly undergoing refinement. Traditionally, and at the outset, the university's emerging awareness of its responsibility to modify its academic isolation and to involve itself directly with the problems of the city took on several tentative forms. It developed seminars and workshops on such problems as urban ghettos, racial discrimination, public housing, and mass transit systems. However extensive the university's commitment was to these programs in terms of human resources and money, most universities still looked upon the urban mission as peripheral to the academic enterprise, if not a threat to the integrity of the research and instructional programs of an intellectual community.

Experience and insight have profoundly altered the universities' awareness of their urban mission. The metropolis is no longer seen as a place in which the university reluctantly invests a modicum of its resources. The metropolis is a process and the university finds itself inextricably a part of that process. As Elden Jacobson writes, "We are an urban nation. We live

HE 014 905

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

in a society characterized by high-density clusterings of people responding to forces and events largely unknown in previous agrarian societies. And to the extent that a future is knowable, these clusterings, forces, and events can be expected to intensify." The once complacent definition of urban as "inner city" is obsolete. So is the attitude that the city is "out there" alien to the intellectual life that goes on "in here." The metropolis, says Jacobson, is a complex set of pervasive forces presently determining the essential features of our society. (Jacobson, 1971)

The university can hardly avoid its own implication in the metropolis. And yet the university has long hampered its involvement in the complex processes of urban life by fragmentation and the proliferation of self-contained disciplines. John Bodine says, "Urban problems are so interwoven, so interdependent that scholars can only consider them together; in other words, it has been found necessary to consider the urban situation as a system in its own right, inescapably transcending the traditional disciplines." (Jacobson, 1971)

If urban complexes do constitute "systems," then traditional academic disciplines are not the most appropriate form of organizing knowledge regarding urban complexity. Systems or systemic inquiry direct attention not only to bodies of knowledge but more critically to the connections and relationships that occur between and among them. A functional approach to knowledge, rather than a strict disciplinary approach, must be combined with a sensitivity to the complex learning, training, research and service needs of both the metropolis and the university.

If the University is to function successfully as a change-agent to improve the quality of life in the urban complex, then new forms of leadership are needed. The issues in urban America overwhelm the skill and competency of any one person, any one department, any one college. Public life and the political sphere demand cooperation, competence, complementary relationships,

knowledge and sensitivity. Public life, by definition, is a group activity where people hold one another accountable, where people complement one another, where conflicts in ideology can often be translated into "let's find out." Such considerations move beyond the abstract intellectual scrutiny of group process and compromise, to conscious investigation of those dynamics through which collective action is possible. It is a process that moves toward genuine human encounter—to community. Interestingly, as the universities become aware of this definition of public life and the urban setting, they also become aware that the same definition applies to the universities. Some urban universities also recognize that this common definition becomes a common bond that makes the urban university a part of the city, not apart from its environment. However, having enshrined individual competition in the name of personal achievement, the university is largely paralyzed when confronted with collectively transforming a commonly-shared sensitivity into a program of inquiry and action.

What the urban university needs is not a project director for urban studies, but a team of competent individuals who pool their respective academic and administrative competencies to design and implement programs that deal not primarily with specific problems such as adult education, consumer education or law enforcement. The team approach must focus on the far wider problem of how to render the city, where 80 percent of the American population resides, a locale where human life can function and where people are educated to live in a world of new possibilities and of new dangers. The university will best be able to meet its urban commitments by developing new structures and processes to meet the rapidly changing demands placed upon the university. The use of project teams, task forces, and other types

of temporary systems, will be the appropriate way for universities to optimize the different capabilities of its human resources. (Lippitt, 1969) In effect, the successful urban university will establish a permanent system of temporary systems.

The development and use of special groups and sub-systems that form the permanent system of temporary systems help the organization to solve problems. Team leadership groups enable people to be many things and to take various roles, to identify with the adaptive and change process and to develop an ability to modify their commitments as needs arise. Team leadership allows individuals to move in or out of various kinds of work group relations which may have a short or long range time dimension. Team leadership enables the university to cope with the complex problems of urban life because teamwork: (1) requires an understanding of and commitment to the university's goals; (2) requires the maximum use of the different resources of individuals within the group; (3) encourages flexibility, sensitivity to the needs of others, and creativity; and (4) manifests successful participative leadership. (Lippitt, 1969) With the support of a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, a team leadership development program for faculty and administrators was designed and implemented at The University of Akron to help further its urban mission and to serve as a model for other urban universities.

The University of Akron has enjoyed a history of urban involvement. Founded as a private liberal arts college in 1870, it became a municipal university in 1913 and a state university in 1967. It has grown to a major university with more than 26,000 enrolled in credit and non-credit courses, offering associate, baccalaureate, masters and doctoral degrees and keeping its doors open virtually around the clock. Starting with the offering of adult education courses in 1928, The University of Akron's urban involvement

has grown to a complexity matched, perhaps, by the complexity of the urban community it serves. Awareness of this growth and complexity, and awareness that an urban address does not make an urban university, caused the faculty and administration of The University of Akron to re-evaluate their urban mission and introduce a system, or network, of change to further this mission. Elements of this network included the development of two statements describing the urban mission and the goals and purposes of The University of Akron; the establishment of a Standing Commission for Institutional Planning and Development representative of faculty, administration and students; the appointment of an ad hoc committee to explore the feasibility of a Center for the Study of the Future; and the design and implementation of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Program for the Development of Team Leadership at an Urban University, to provide an organized and concerted opportunity for the people who <u>are</u> the University to further develop their team leadership capabilities in support of the change activities.

The Team Leadership program, now into its second year, has essentially six interrelated steps: (1) the selection of participants; (2) a weekend retreat; (3) eight full-day class sessions, meeting once a week for eight weeks; (4) task forces; (5) internships; and (6) evaluation. The selection process was based on invitations mailed to the 830 faculty and administrators, describing the program and inviting them to complete applications for participation. From the 148 applications received, a faculty/administration selection committee recommended 108 to attend the four sequential classes. The classes were organized to represent an equal mix of faculty and administrators, with both horizontal (disciplinary) and vertical (status) representation.

The Retreat and the eight class sessions (Steps 2 and 3) were designed to emphasize three major thrusts. The earlier period emphasized intergroup

interaction and communication — listening, awareness and understanding. Later, as the participants became familiar with the first thrust, emphasis was shifted to an understanding of the structure and dynamics of university organization and operations. The skills and understandings developed during the first two thrusts were then applied to the third thrust: issues in higher education and specific problems and needs of The University of Akron as an urban institution. The two statements on urban mission and goals and purposes, coupled with selected readings provided the underpinnings for the Retreat and class sessions. The format of the Retreat and class sessions included presentations, discussions, demonstrations, simulations, role-playing and other involvement exercises. Dr. David DeShon of Task Think Workshops, Inc., Kalamazoo, Michigan, provided invaluable consultation in the design of the Retreat and classes.

The objectives of the three-thrust approach were to develop diagnostic skills and leadership and team building skills that can be applied to areas of need identified through the use of the diagnostic skills.

During the class sessions, time was allocated for the participants to identify task force issues that would apply to the University's urban mission. At the completion of each of the four classes, these recommendations were presented to the University president for his approval. Today over ten presidentially appointed task forces of Kellogg participants are actively involved in following up on their recommendations. In addition, members of Class I are involved with the Task Forces of the Standing Commission for Institutional Planning and Development. Thus, Step 4, is well underway.

Step 5, internships, provides an opportunity for participants who have completed the Retreat and class sessions to become involved in a problem-solving or need-meeting activity that cuts across departmental and

disciplinary lines and relates to the University's urban mission. Funds are available to support at least eight interns for up to 50 percent time for 12 months. To date, three internships have been awarded and several applications are currently under review.

Evaluation of the program—Step 6--is ongoing or formative, as well as summative. Dr. Gordon Lippitt, George Washington University, is providing the outside evaluation. Although it is still early, all signs thus far are very positive. But, perhaps, the most telling evaluation is in the anecdotal responses of the participants and the ways in which the learnings are being transferred into the university environment.

Participants reported the use of learnings and processes within the University (colleagues, department meetings, college meetings, interdepartmental activities, university committees, and classes); in their daily activities (family life, civic, and church); professional groups; and employer-employee relationships. Some of the processes that were used and specifically cited were:

- o Consensus tactics
- o Obtaining services
- o Personal communication
- o Persuasion
- o Shared leadership
- o Listening skills
- o Evaluation skills
- o Recognizing differences in perspective and meaning
- o Furthering the objectives and activities of sub-units within the organization in support of the university's urban mission
- o Lowered defensiveness
- o Applying concepts in group meetings

Certainly, neither individual nor organizational behavior patterns change easily or quickly. And it is too early to make any firm judgments on the results. However, what can be seen and what has been reported thus far is encouraging. The following excerpts from a memorandum written by one of the participants says it well:

> Let me say at the outset that I have found the Kellogg Program to be extremely beneficial to me, not always in the way I had projected it might be, but certainly in the process and end results that the Program generated.
>
> As a professional educator I necessarily deal with people. The Kellogg Program taught me a great deal about people and about how I can better relate to people. I have learned much better how groups handle problems and work toward consensus or agreement. It is apparent now that there is such a phenomenon as group leadership that can work in tandem with and supplement that more traditional leadership structure of the single authority figure.
>
> Has all this exposure and involvement in the practice of communication skills actually made a difference in my relations with people? Yes, and I would like to mention a few instances. For one thing I am less fearful of what others think or say about me and this increased self-confidence has allowed me to be much more open with my students and my colleagues. I now ask for evaluation from the students more frequently now that I am less apprehensive about what they might say about my teaching. I am more inclined to ask how they feel, what they are thinking, what they would like to do with a particular course. In general, I find a new spirit of openness that characterizes my relations with students. I am much more sensitive about students' feelings; less quick to judge until I have more information about them. With my colleagues I have acquired an openness that enables me to deal more directly with them and prevents me from playing games or concealing my true feelings. The openness is not always appreciated, and at times it may cause me some discomfort, but I cannot be comfortable with any less degree of candor.
>
> My experience in group projects has led to the conviction that in coming to a decision, the process of reaching a consensus is far more satisfactory than the win-or-lose method a secret ballot entails. I have not always been successful in convincing my colleagues that a consensus is a much more appropriate process than a ballot, but at least to me a consensus is a perceived value.
>
> The many sessions in the Program devoted to the study and analysis of the university as an organization has given me a number of new

perspectives on the approach to the possible solutions to problems within the university. No one segment of the organization is capable of having all the information or expertise needed to reach a decision. I have become extremely aware of the negative and disruptive consequences of holding on to such dichotomies as R. D. Laing's us and them, and I am consciously aware of reminding myself not to lapse into that mind set.

...I honestly think I feel closer to The University of Akron now, and I sense a deeper loyalty, principally because I have come to know and respect people who make up distinct components within the university, so my affection and loyalty is not aimed at a faceless institution but at the people whose discreet contributions make the university succeed.

...we are people selected from an organization that more or less operates on a paternalistic system and our first reactions are usually passive acceptance or, in the word of one of the participants, obedience. We have been trained for years to follow, to accept decisions from the top; we have not been asked to offer as a group a decision or a policy. It's tough in ten weeks to rinse out that passivity and lack of spontaneity. I was painfully aware several times of how I failed to respond with leadership simply because rarely have I been asked to act as a leader. I see now that the University has everything to gain from the process of group leadership, and the Kellogg Program is an essential first step.

This is not an uncommon response from the participants. And that's why we think the program is on the right track as a critical activity for moving an urban university forward.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bennis, W., "Theory and Method in Applying Behavioral Sciences to Planned Organizational Change," Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 1:4, 1965, p. 357.

Jacobson, E., and P. Palmer, Urban Curricula and the Liberal Arts College, National Council of Churches, New York, 1971, pp. 2, 8, 14, 16.

Lippitt, G., Team Building for Matrix Organizations, Society for Personnel Administration, August, 1969, pp. 4-6.

Mondale, C. C., A New Direction for the Urban University, George Washington University, Washington, D. C., 1974.

Schindler-Rainman, E., and R. Lippitt, Team Training for Community Change: Concepts, Goals, Strategies and Skills, University of California Extension, Riverside, 1972.

Smith, V. B., "The City and the Campus," Paper presented at the 56th Annual Meeting, American Council on Education, Washington, D. C., October, 1973.

"A Strategy for Higher Education Associations in Promoting the Urban Involvement of Colleges and Universities," American Council on Education Special Report, Washington, D. C., 1973.